



IMAGE 1

Manny Farber
Mocking Bird, 2001
Oil on board

- Look closely at this work of art. What is the first thing that you notice?
- Take turns describing the lines and shapes that you see in this work of art. For example, thin curving lines, thick lines, yellow circles, etc. Look at the line with ridges running down the artwork from the top to the bottom. Does this look like anything familiar? *This is rebar—a steel rod used in construction.* Why do you think the artist may have included this in his artwork? (*The artist Manny Farber often includes in his artwork references to his past work in construction.*)
- As you look at the lines in this artwork—the stems, stalks and rebar—do they help guide your eyes around the painting? What other objects do you see in the artwork? Why do you think the artist included rebar, a reference to his past, together with flowers, vases, and birds? Do you think they have meaning?
- *Manny Farber’s paintings are playful and personal, and they include objects from his daily life. The flowers and natural objects depicted in this piece were likely collected from his home garden, picked-up from a nearby vegetable stand, or observed on a nature walk. His paintings are autobiographical—a story of his life, told by him—reminiscent of his past and representing the present.*
- Now, look closely at the colors in this work of art, which one did you see first? Did you notice the background colors? What do you see? (*The background is divided into fields of color. In Farber’s works he “compartmentalizes”—or divides—his backgrounds into squares and rectangles. This structural way of painting, he says, comes directly from his work in construction and carpentry.*)
- Explain how the two background colors look different to you. Are they warm? Cool? Bright? Dull?
- Do you see the background colors repeated anywhere in the artwork? Do you see repeated shapes and textures? *Explain to students that artists like Farber carefully place each element into a particular place of an artwork. This is called composition—the placement or arrangement of the elements of art in a work. Artists also repeat colors, textures, lines, and shapes to guide our eyes through a painting. This is called rhythm.*

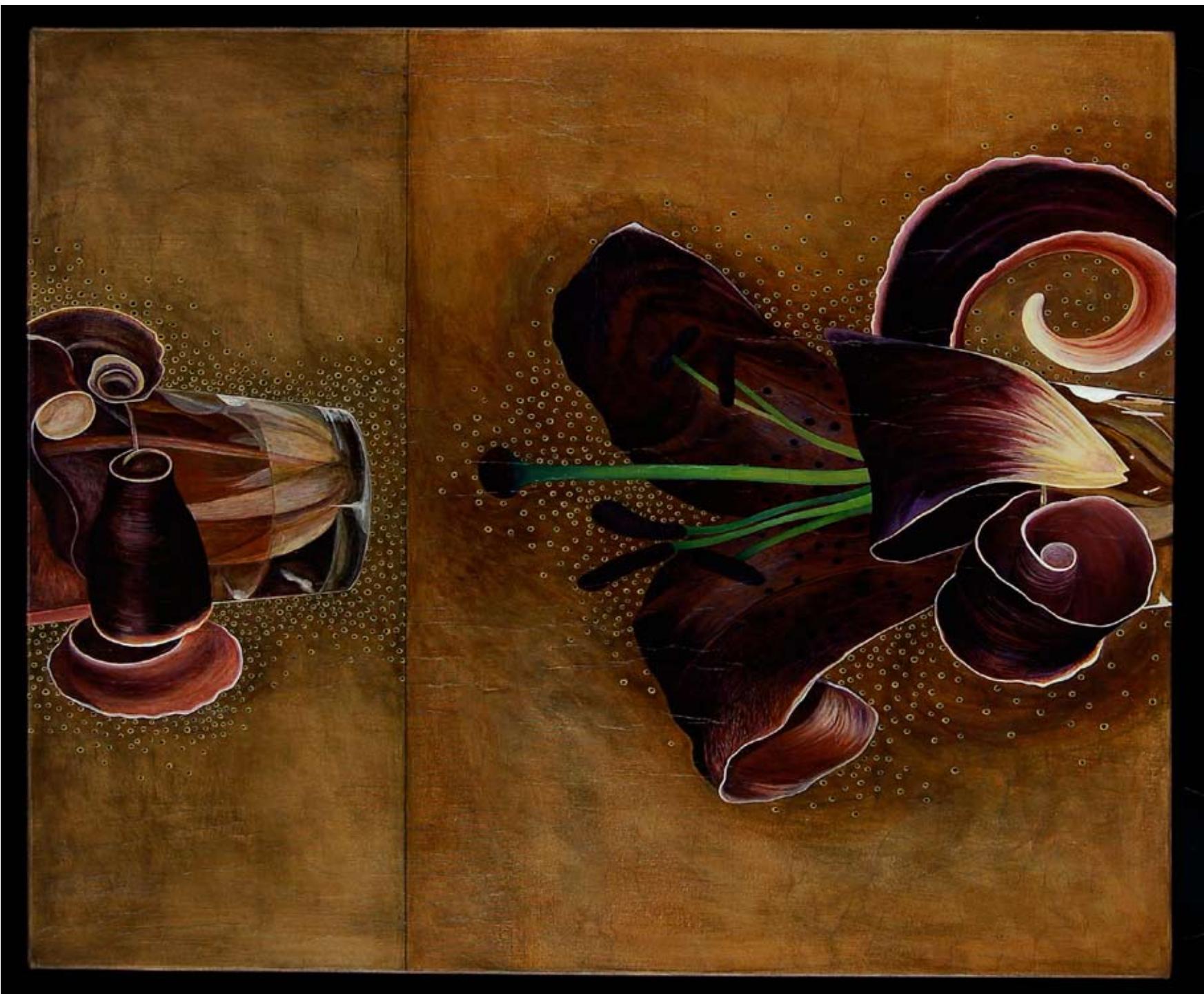


IMAGE 2

Olga Seem
Duality (10), 2006
Acrylic on paper on canvas

- Does this artwork look real to you? Explain.
- Look closely at this image of a flower. What basic shapes do you see? Ovals, triangles, circles?
- Can anyone name any or all of the parts of this flower? (Reference *Parts of the Flower*; page 16.) How do you think the artist created this detailed image of a flower?

To create her artworks, the artist Olga Seem closely examines the anatomy of flowers. She sometimes dissects parts of the flower to see the insides. Seem often divides the painting into segments, a method that permits her to show the entire plant as well as the particular parts of its anatomy that intrigue her. By carefully observing the flower, and the intricate elements within a plant, Seem captures the flower's details, colors, and form in her artwork.

Her artworks reflect her exploration of forms and patterns found in nature—the seeds, pods, and plants at their various stages of development.
- What patterns—the repetition of anything, shape, lines, color—do you see on this flower? (*Notice the shape of the petals, the colors on each petal, the repeating lines of the flower—the repetition of the stamens, etc.*)
- Did you notice the markings on the petals? *Markings, called honey guides, show insects the way to the nectar (food) of the flower.* What repeating shapes did the artist use to create the markings? (*Dots*) Do you see dots repeated anywhere else in the artwork? Where?
- Nature is full of repeating patterns. Again look at Seem's Lily flower. What basic shape to you see? Does the face of the flower look like a circle? Notice how the parts are arranged in a wheel like fashion. *Flowers that are positioned in a circular plan are radially symmetrical. It can be divided equally in many directions. If a flower can be divided into two equal halves only along one line through the center, it is bilaterally symmetrical.* Can you think of any flowers that may be bilaterally symmetrical? What are they?
- Did the artist use dark or light colors in the background and for the flower? (*Both the background and the flower are dark, muted colors/hues.*)
- Look again closely, does one part of the flower stand out more than the rest? What do you notice first? *Artists often use outlining to define shapes and to create space around the shapes. In order for closely related colors or hues to remain separate, sometimes black and white outlining is used.*



IMAGE 3

Carol Goldmark
Fleurs Mortes #23, 2007
Oil on canvas

- Look closely at this arrangement of flowers. What different colors did the artist use to create these flowers? What colors do you see the most of in this work of art? Do the colors of the flowers help to tell the story?
- Throughout history, painters have used flowers in their artworks for symbolic purposes. Can you think of any flowers that symbolize something? For example, roses symbolize love and romance. By looking closely at this artwork, what do you think these flowers may symbolize? Notice the colors and forms, do the flowers look alive or in states of decay?

In Goldmark's drawings and paintings, she uses flowers as metaphors for life and death, beauty and decay, and the passage of time. Her vivid paintings are filled with botanical forms in various arrangements and states of decay. All living things, including plants, have a beginning, they grow, and die—these changes that living things go through are called life cycles.

- Look again at the artwork. What is the first flower that you see? What color do you see in the background? Do you think the artist intentionally used the black background to draw your eye to the white decaying lily flower in the foreground? Explain.

Artists use value—the lightness or darkness of a color—to help determine the position of objects in space, whether they are far away, in the middle, or in the distance. When a background is a very dark value or black, the objects usually seen first are very light. The same applies for backgrounds that are very light or white, the objects usually seen first will be very dark.

- As you look at the flowers and leaves, do some flowers look farther away or in the back? If so, what colors are they? Now, look at the colors of the flowers that look closer, or in the foreground, what color are those flowers?

Artists often use cooler or duller colors (greens, blues, violets) for objects they want to appear farther away—to portray an illusion of depth, and gradually use warmer colors (yellows, oranges, reds) in the middle ground or foreground to make things advance and appear closer in a picture.

- Where do you see any repeated lines or shapes in this artwork?
- Does this work of art express an emotion? Does it make you feel happy, sad, uneasy, neutral?



IMAGE 4

Sandra Sallin
Prelude II, 1996
Graphite on Strathmore

- Look closely at the flowers and the vase. What basic shapes do you see? Ovals, circles, rectangles? Now, describe the lines that you see. Diagonal lines, curvy lines, straight lines? Do these flowers look two-dimensional—having height and width, or three-dimensional—having or appearing to have height, width, and depth? *Artists like Sallin use shapes and lines to make objects, like these flowers, look three-dimensional on two-dimensional surfaces.*
- As you identify the shapes in this artwork, you may see another place to look for shapes—in the space around and in between the flowers. *This is called negative space—an empty space, or void, in an artwork.* What shapes do you see in the negative space? Do you think the negative space and positive space—the space in an artwork that is filled with something, such as lines, designs, color or shapes—looks balanced?
- Compare this Image to IMAGE 3, how is this artwork similar to Carol Goldmark’s arrangement of flowers? (*Both artworks have black backgrounds.*) Which flower did you see first in Goldmark’s artwork? Now, look again at Sallin’s image, which flowers do you notice first, the lightest flowers or the darker flowers? *Black and white offer a striking contrast in artworks.*
- Without light, we wouldn’t see anything at all. Look closely at this image. Where do you think the light source, or origin of the light, is coming from in this artwork? From the upper left, upper right, from below? (*Upper right.*) Where are the flowers lightest or most intense? Now, describe where the flowers are the darkest, where do you see shadows?

To make artworks more realistic, or to make them look three-dimensional on a two-dimensional surface, artists translate shadow into values, gradually changing the value from light to dark as the object gets further from the light. Shadows cast from a light source give objects more depth and form.

Try this: Find an object to look at in the classroom. Notice where the shadows fall. Where is the light source? Straight above, to the right, to the left? Reposition the object so the light hits the object differently. Now where do you see the shadow’s angles? Do you see shadows on the object? Can you see different values within the shadow? Notice how the shadows change as the direction of the light source changes.



IMAGE 5

Mary Manusos
Red Bloom on Blanket, 2004
Etchings on handmade paper

- Look at the colors in this work of art, which one did you see first?
- Look closely at this artwork. This image is two-dimensional. When looking at it does it look like the artist overlapped the colors to create space? Which colors look like they are up close and which colors look like they are farther away?

Artists often use cooler or duller colors in a background to convey an illusion of depth, and gradually use warmer colors in the middle ground and foreground to make things advance and appear closer.

- Look closely at this artwork. Describe the shapes and lines that you see. Do you see any shapes or objects that you recognize? Describe.

Did the artist depict the flower true to life or did she simplify the flower? Explain. What other shapes suggest something to you? Explain what you see.

Manusos' artworks are abstract representations of flower blooms. Abstract imagery is not realistic. Abstract artists exaggerate or simplify the forms they see around them.

- Look again at the colors in this artwork and notice if, and how, the colors affects your mood. What do you think of when you see the color red? How does that color make you feel? What do you think of when you see the color green? How does that color make you feel?

Does this work of art express an emotion? What emotion do you think it expresses?

Manusos often incorporates into her artworks the bright colors and light she experienced on her travels to Mexico and Latin America.

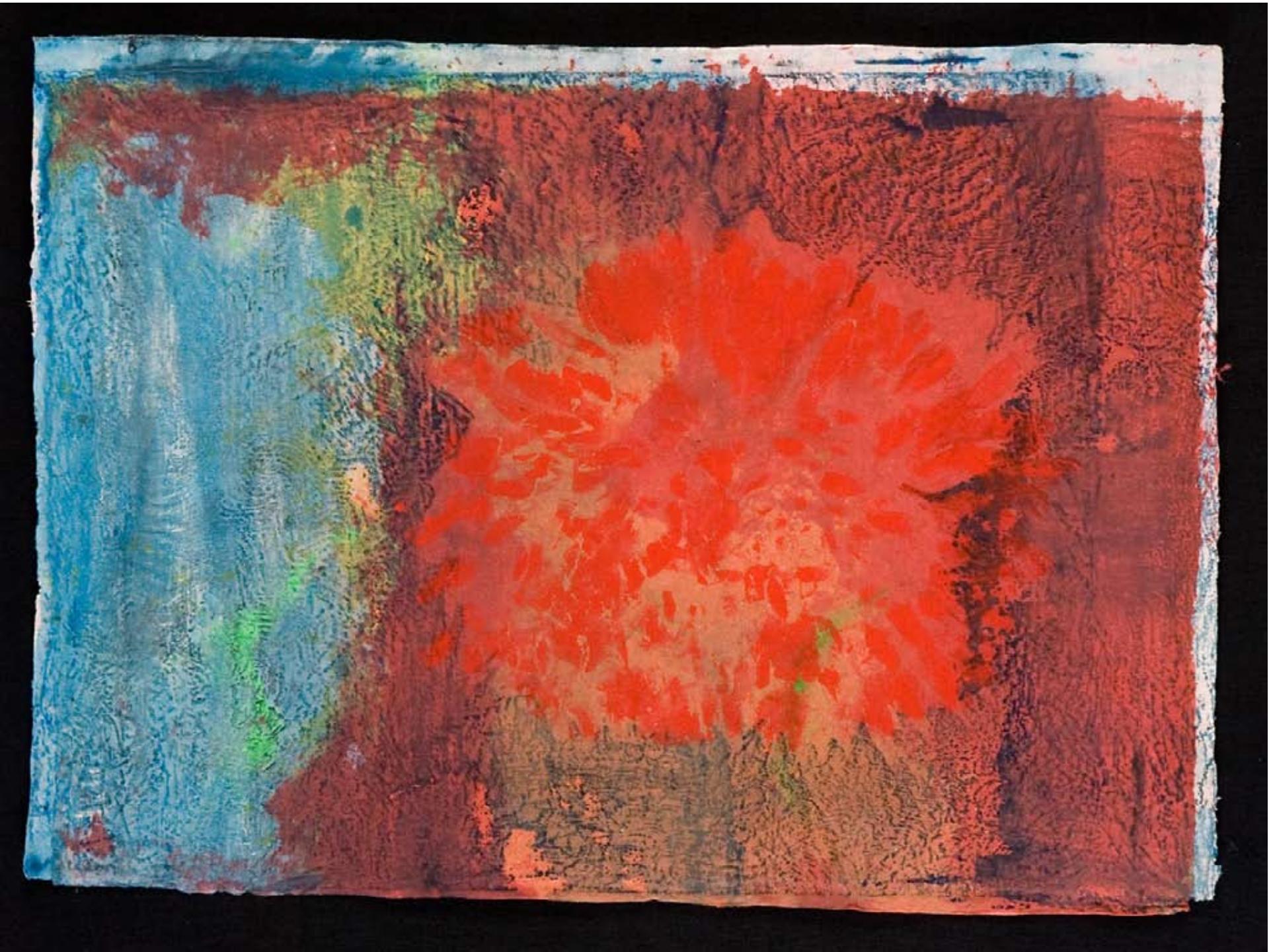


IMAGE 6

Mary Manusos
Broken, 2006
Etchings on handmade paper

- This is another artwork by Mary Manusos. How is this image different than the first image? Does this artwork look more or less abstract than the first image?
- What color or shape did you notice first? How does the use of color change the look of this artwork? Can you identify the flower? How is the flower different than the flower in IMAGE 5? How is it the same?

For her artworks, Mary Manusos uses handmade paper. She transforms pulp into sheaths of paper of multiple blocks of color. While creating the paper, Manusos also uses a printing technique called etching. She etches an image onto a metal plate that she then inks and presses onto the colored paper. The etching provides sharp definition and contrast to the abstract color blocks.

The artist often uses the same etching in a series of works, but because of the random placement of color swatches on her handmade paper, each bloom looks different.